

AIDS awareness among the youth

*75. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that according to a survey 73 percent of young people have misconceptions about HIV;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that according to the said survey many young brides may be more vulnerable to HIV than unmarried girls; and
- (d) if so, the steps being taken by Government to create more awareness on HIV among this segment of society?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTHAND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) According to the National Behavioural Surveillance Survey (BSS) conducted in 2001, 73% of youth population had misconceptions on certain incorrect modes of transmission such as mosquito bite and sharing meals. However, during the BSS carried out in 2006, the percentage decrease to 49.4%. The survey also showed that 88.5% of the youth population had heard of HIV/AIDS and 60% were aware that consistent condom use and being faithful to one's partner protects against HIV transmission. The report does not mention regarding the higher vulnerability of young brides as compared to the unmarried girls.

The core strategy of National AIDS Control Programme continues to be prevention. IEC campaigns through mass media and inter-personnel channels are being used with a special focus on youth for propagating abstinence and delay of sexual debut, being faithful to their partner and correct and consistent condom use. The focus is also on the life skill development among youth to protect themselves. With the constitution of National Council on AIDS under the chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, HIV prevention messages are being disseminated by mainstreaming them into all ongoing Government programmes, organized private sector and civil society organizations.